

ly important; and by the blessing of God they may be accomplished. The great attention which other communities now pay to their Sunday-schools, requires that the pious and influential among us should more fully identify themselves with ours. The altered circumstances of society, too, render this necessary. Formerly infidel principles were found chiefly among the higher and educated classes; but now the humblest mechanic is heard denying the immortality of the soul, the inspiration of the Scriptures, and, in fact, all religious and moral obligation. Many factories are, to a greater or less extent, nurseries of sedition and heresy; and in some of our large towns, nearly every street can furnish oracles of atheism, and malignant impugnors of revealed religion. Lectures are supported, and publications are circulated, the direct tendency of which is to blaspheme God, to embroil man, and to subvert the foundation of civil and religious society. By these means the best interests of our youth are endangered, and unless we can make them acquainted with the evidences of Christianity, and other subjects illustrative of the Scriptures, and confirmatory of the Christian faith, need we wonder if they be led away by the error of the wicked? While, then, worldly politicians are pressing the claims of a godless literature on the attention of the nation; and while the patrons of infidelity are labouring to bring in a state of things, in which there shall be no worship paid to God, no Sabbath sanctified, no marriages solemnized, no rights of property respected, and no punishment inflicted on evil-doers; surely it is the imperative duty of all who love God, religion, truth, their country, or their fellow-men, to bestir themselves, to disinter their talents, to throw a defence around the rising generation, and by every means promote their instruction in the truth. Except in a very few instances, Sunday-schools among us are no longer raised into rivalry with the Christian ministry, the public worship of God, or the sanctification of the Sabbath; so that the greatest advocates of good order need not dread embarking in their service. Brethren, there are tens of thousands of children in the manufacturing districts especially, who must be taught on the Sunday, or they will grow up untaught; who must be acquainted with the principles, evidences, and claims of Christianity in your Sunday-schools, or they will be made acquainted with infidelity elsewhere; and who must obtain profitable and entertaining books of your school-libraries, or they will read pieces which pollute, and books which teach the way to hell.

Another subject to which we earnestly invite your attention, brethren, is the sanctification of the Sabbath. Our proneness to forget this duty is presupposed in the preface to the commandment, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy;" and our aptness to evade its restrictions is placed under check by the minuteness of its injunctions. The sovereign authority and the paternal love of God shine most conspicuously in this law; for while he commands the highest to respect his example, and worship him, he gives the meanest servant a chartered right to a weekly rest, on the ground that such a pause in worldly toil is no less necessary to the recruiting and physical energies, than to the refreshment and renewal of his soul in righteousness. That we might be saved from questioning its divine origin, God spoke all the words of this law with his own lips, and wrote them with his own "finger;" to teach us its perpetual obligation, he wrote it in "tables of stone;" and to shew its connexion and harmony with the economy of grace, it was "sprinkled with blood," laid up in "the ark," covered with "the mercy-seat," and overshadowed with "the glory of the Lord." The Lord Jesus not only fulfilled it, but he magnified it, and made it honourable, by adopting it as part of the law of his kingdom; and appointed that his Spirit should write it upon the hearts of his people. He called himself, "Lord of the Sabbath;" and by transferring the festival to "the first day of the week," thereby rendering it commemorative of his ceasing from the labours of our redemption, he made it *Christian*; and at the same time furnished additional motives why we should call it "a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable;" and should "honour him, not doing our own ways, nor finding our own pleasure, nor speaking our own words."

See then, beloved brethren, that you, your sons, and your daughters, your men servants, and your maid-servants, and the stranger that is within your gates, "remember" to keep this day holy. Endeavour to close your business-affairs, and to complete your domestic arrangements, in such time, that Saturday evening may be a season of hallowed preparation. Rise early, and follow our good old custom of attending the morning prayer-meeting. In your family worship, be solemn, fervent, and full: suffer nothing, public or private, to induce you to hurry over an exercise which necessarily affects the very core of personal and domestic religion. In your attendance at the house of God, be punctual; and religiously guard against late attendance. Emit heartily in singing the high praises of God; pray in the Holy Ghost; hear the word with docility, and in the exercise of an appropriating faith. Improve the intervals of worship by Scripture reading and religious conversation; and either in the afternoon or the evening, catechise and pray with your children. Suffer neither newspapers, history, nor books of science,

to form any part of your Sunday reading. Sacredly abstain from trading-journeys and pleasure-excursions; and neither read nor write letters of business. Discourage Sunday visiting, and shut out political conversation. If any of you are connected with Rail-road or other Companies, who prostitute the Sabbath to purposes of worldly pleasure or gain, we charge you, before God, to take the first opportunity of protesting against the impropriety. The loss of money must not be put in comparison with the favour of God. We are strongly impressed, that the present unparalleled commercial distress is an intimation of the divine displeasure, and is designed to turn us from our national sins, of which Sabbath-breaking is one. The Sabbath is dear to God; it is essentially connected with the honour of his name, and the continuance of his worship; nor will he permit nations or individuals to profane it with impunity. He is now visiting us for these things; and a tender regard for his glory, the good of our country, and the salvation of your families, constrains us to say again, "Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy."

Connected with this subject is the evil of embarking in extravagant business speculations. The folly of this has been made painfully apparent by numerous instances of failure in all parts of the kingdom. But it is important that you, and all who are called by the holy name of Jesus, should be fully aware of its sinfulness. Such speculations obviously imply a making haste to be rich; and they argue a want of contentment with such things as we have. They are the natural manifestations of pride and covetousness; and are directly opposed to the apostolic injunction, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." When such speculations succeed, they inflame and estrange us from God and his people. When they miscarry, they bring on aggravated distress, and perhaps sink us into the sorrow of the world, which worketh death. If they are undertaken with our own money, we cannot be said to glorify God with the substance so employed; and we lay ourselves open to temptations to wrong the poor and the cause of God, by so locking up our property as to make it difficult, if not impossible, to meet their claims. But, generally speaking, they are undertaken to a great extent with the property of others; and when this is the case, it implies a manifest breach of the love we owe to our neighbour, and a deliberate departure from the way of Providence; for God can never direct a man to do that which implies a violation of his own law. The money borrowed for such purposes is almost invariably obtained by false pretensions, and without a fair probability of paying it; and as is the sin, such are its consequences. "They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."

But, beloved, we hope better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak. While others are idolizing the talent of worldly good, see that you faithfully improve it to the glory of God, and the good of your fellow-creatures. Keep in memory that you are only stewards of the manifold mercies of God; and that laying up treasure on earth is as clearly prohibited, as is the squandering of our Lord's goods by riotous living. The Funds of our Connexion are all important; and the efficient support of each is essential to the prosperity of the great work in which we as a people are embarked. But our Missionary Fund at present claims particular attention. The Heathen are not only perishing, but perishing with the cry for help on their lips. Ethiopia is stretching out her hands to us, as the almoners of God; not only that we may protect her from those that enslave and oppress her, but also that we may bless her with the Gospel of peace. The fields, in all parts of the world, are white unto the harvest; and there are labourers, lingering on our shores, and longing, in the true spirit of Christian enterprise, to preach the Gospel in the regions beyond. But we want the means of sending them forth. Our very successes embarrass us. A wide and effectual door is set before us; and, though there are many adversaries, they are restrained. Brethren, our Missionary Committee are in a great strait. The cause is ours as much as theirs. Let us inquire whether we have fully discharged our obligations to God and his cause? whether our rate of giving be in strict accordance with our vows, our income, the injunctions of Scripture, and the necessities of our perishing fellow-men?

At no former period have we had greater encouragement to abound in the work of the Lord than at present. One hundred and three young men have been approved as Candidates for our ministry; and, growing from the recommendation given by the District-Meetings, they promise to be blessings to our societies. Fifty-four junior Preachers, having honourably fulfilled the term of their probation, have been admitted into full connexion; and we earnestly commend them to your prayers. The number of members in our societies throughout the world is four hundred and twenty-eight thousand seven hundred and twenty-nine; being an increase, during the year, of twenty-two thousand five

hundred and fifty-one. Of this increase, sixteen thousand seven hundred and seventy-four have been added in Great Britain and Ireland, and five thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven on the Mission stations. For this great increase we glorify our gracious Lord. But living in a world of change, and allied to a dying race, necessity is laid upon us, that we mingle the note of sorrow with our songs of praise. During the past year, twenty-seven of our esteemed fathers and brethren have departed his life. They died in the Lord, and the voice from heaven pronounced them "blessed;" for "they rest from their labours, and their works follow them."

In a great Connexion like ours, many members necessarily change their place of residence in the course of a year, and the schedules of nearly all the Circuits show a considerable deficit in members received, as compared with those that are removed. The benefits of Christian fellowship are invaluable under any circumstances; but they are peculiarly so when we have to dwell among strangers. We are therefore at a loss fully to account for the fact that so many of our people who manifest great esteem for the means of grace when at home and surrounded by friends, should, on going to a distance, neglect to apply for the usual "note of removal." Leaving their respective neighbourhoods without this, they lay themselves open to suspicion; they deprive themselves of an honourable introduction to the Ministers of the place where they settle; and, as hundreds of instances annually prove, they run great hazard of sinking into a state of estrangement from God, and the ordinances of his house. This, brethren, is unprofitable for you, and it is grievous to us. We therefore entreat that in future you will neither suffer business, nor temptation, nor adverse circumstances to keep you from applying, either personally, or by your Leaders, for the certificate of your membership, which it will always afford us pleasure to supply.

Our present Conference has been an eminently happy one. The Lord has been in the midst of us; and his Holy Spirit has come down upon our assemblies. The word has been preached with power; and we have no doubt that our beloved people in Newcastle, and the neighbouring towns, whose liberality and kindness have been above all praise, will long remember their first Conference as a season of special refreshing to them and their families.

Admonished and encouraged by these events, we now address ourselves, in the name of our Lord, to the work of the ensuing year; and we are deeply solicitous that it may be a year distinguished by a superabounding blessing from the Lord. Some churches, regard revivals of religion as gracious singularities in their history; we regard them as essential to our existence. If a regular series of divine visitations, issuing in the conversion of sinners, be not vouchsafed to us, we must either change the spiritual constitution of our discipline, or we shall pine away from among the tribes of God's Israel. But we have hope in God, though we thus speak. The world is redeemed; God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth; it is promised that the Holy Spirit shall be poured upon all flesh;" the Lord Jesus has declared that he will be with his servants even to the end. "All things are ready;" and He who cannot lie hath said to his disciples, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven." Brethren, let us "give" ourselves "to prayer;" and let us live in the confident expectation that God will do as he hath said. If he sends down "the former and the latter rain" on a village, a town, or a Circuit, let us rejoice; but let us not be satisfied till it takes the sweep of the country, of the kingdom, of the world. For all former effusions of thy Holy Spirit, we praise thee, O Lord! But now, by thy mighty hand and out-stretched arm, and for thy own name's sake, cast down thy ancient foe. Thou hast given thy Son the Heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession. Thy people have brought the tithes into the storehouse, and there is meat in thy house; and now we humbly prove thee herewith, and wait to see if thou wilt not open the windows of heaven, and pour us out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it. Amen.

Signed, by order of the Conference,
ROBERT NEWTON, *President*,
JOHN HANNAH, *Secretary*.

Newcastle-upon-Tyne, August 15th, 1840.

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